DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 324 811 EA 022 349

AUTHOR Wilson, Carol; And Others
TITLE Breaking New Ground: Reflections on the School-University Partnerships in the National Network for Educational Renewal. Occasional Paper No. 8.
INSTITUTION Washington Univ., Seattle. Center for Educational Renewal.
PUB DATE May 89
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Cooperative Programs; Educational Cooperation; Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Institutional Cooperation; *Networks; Organizational Effectiveness; *Program Development; Program Evaluation; School Based Management; Shared Resources and Services; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS *National Network for Educational Renewal

ABSTRACT

Successes and setbacks of 14 school-university partnerships in the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) are discussed in relation to the general characteristics of individual and institutional change cycles. Six observed problems related to achieving NNER agenda are as follows: (1) misunderstandings about the agenda; (2) diversity of individual partnership objectives; (3) conflict between process and substance; (4) resistance to change; (5) leadership styles and objectives; and (6) information dissemination. Organizational development is discussed according to five stages: getting organized, early successes, waiting for results, major successes and expansions, and mature partnership. developmental stages are discussed and recommendation are made for topics of further inquiry. (10 references) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED324811

Center for Educational Renewal

BREAKING NEW GROUND: REFLECTIONS ON THE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL

Carol Wilson, Richard Clark, Paul Heckman

Occasional Paper No. 8

May 1989

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. D. Goodlad

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES

Institute for the Study of Educational Policy
College of Education
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195

EA 022 349

BREAKING NEW GROUND: REFLECTIONS ON THE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL

Carol Wilson, Richard Clark, Paul Heckman

Occasional Paper No. 8

May 1989

PREFACE

The papers in this series now constitute a substantial corpus of information and analysis regarding school-university partnerships and particularly a special case of the genre--namely the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER). Occasional Paper No. 1 traces development of the underlying concepts and roots of the NNER. It includes the mission statement designed to give guidance to the fourteen school-university partnerships belonging to the Network.

Occasional Paper No. 2 provides an intensive review of the literature on school-university relations. Clearly, relationships between the two sets of institutions have been less than close; productive collaborations have been few in number. The paper makes clear that effecting a union around shared goals is fraught with difficulties. Occasional Paper No. 5 reveals that directing education improvement to institutions in addition to individuals requires a different shift in perspective. And seeking renewal in two sets of quite different institutions simultaneously is a daunting challenge. Nonetheless, the idea of effecting close partnerships between schools and universities currently is being greeted with considerable enthusiasm, especially by individuals who have not yet seriously tried to match action to the rhetoric.

Because of experiences early on with an ambitious effort to effect the implied joining, my colleagues and I in the Center for Educational Renewal entered into school-university partnerships with cautious optimism. From the beginning, we have regarded the National Network for Educational Renewal as a social experiment. This perspective assumes the need for ongoing reflection and formative evaluation.

Consequently, an early part of this process was the writing of several case histories of the NNER and other partnerships in progress and considerable

reflection on the entire undertaking.[1] Then, the Center commissioned Calvin Frazier, former Commissioner of Education for Colorado, to visit all fourteen partnerships, comment on his observations, and make suggestions for the future. The results constitute Occasional Paper No. 6.

Occasional Paper No. 8 continues the reflective process. The three authors--Carol Wilson, Richard Clark, and Paul Heckman--serve the Center as consultants and in their coordinating role, provide support and effect networking. Although their services are made available to all partnerships on a limited basis, each seeks a close relationship with only four or five within a large geographic region. Their collective knowledge of the NNER as a whole and of the fourteen partnerships viewed individually is substantial.

Most of what is now Occasional Paper No. 8 was prepared by the authors to stimulate dialogue among approximately ninety representatives of the partnerships convening in November 1988 (see Occasional Paper No. 7). Subsequently, they extended their thinking in the preparation of this paper. Whereas Frazier sought primarily to use his observations and interviews to generalize about the strengths and weaknesses of the several partnerships and the NNER as an educational improvement strategy, the present authors sought to link the successes and setbacks of the fourteen to general characteristics of individual and institutional change cycles. It becomes clear that a good deal of what Frazier described is to considerable degree predictable.

We intend to continue this kind of inquiry on the assumption that it will help all of us in the NNER to do better and especially to make changes thoughtfully rather than haphazardly. In addition, we have a responsibility to inform others in such way that they are able to profit from this social experiment--from our difficulties and failures as well as from the successes everyone prefers to report.

My colleagues and I in the Center for Educational Renewal appreciate the financial support from the Hewlett Foundation that makes our ongoing inquiry possible.

John I. Goodlad
Director
Center for Educational Renewal

BREAKING NEW GROUND: REFLECTIONS ON THE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL

INTRODUCTION

Occasional Paper No. 8 examines the National Network for Educational Renewal (NNER) from the perspective of the three regional coordinators who have visited and otherwise have been in contact with each of the partnerships over the past two and one half years. Our examination of the fourteen partnerships in the Network proceeds through a set of dilemmas and issues that seem to be present in all of the partnerships as each has sought to understand and advance the agenda to which it is committed.

The overarching purpose of the NNER is to promote the simultaneous renewal of schools and the education of educators. We define renewal as the "process of initiating, creating, and confronting needed changes so as to make it possible for organizations to become or remain viable, to adapt to new conditions, to solve problems, to learn from experience, and to move toward greater organizational maturity."[2] This differs from simply improving what already exists or inserting innovations into a deficient context.

THE AGENDA

The NNER agenda is the central driving force for renewal in each of the partnership settings. It "grows out of rather simple detective work carried out in...{the} Study of Schooling, and by both Boyer and by Sizer, in their studies of high schools, and in some other of the more thoughtful analyses appearing in the last decade."[3] In agreeing to the agenda, each partnership understood that it would develop activities to fit its context and, therefore, would vary from

the others in addressing the NNER agenda. The agenda at once identifies hard-rock issues and suggests approaches for confronting challenges such as the following:

1. The creation of exemplary sites where future teachers are educated that demonstrate the best we know about how schools should function.

2. The creation of internships and residencies for educational specialists (including administrators) through which these professionals can observe and gain experience with the best possible educational practices.

3. The development of curricula that truly reflect the best analyses and projections of what young people need.

4. The assurance of equal access by all students to these curricula.

5. The cultivation of site-based staff development activities designed to foster continual school renewal, particularly of the curriculum and accompanying instructional practices.

6. The restructuring of schools to assure increased continuity of students' programs, decreased accumulation of partial and inadequate or misdirected learnings, decreased alienation and dropping out of students, and more effective utilization of varied teaching resources, including technology.

7. The continuous infusion of knowledge relative to good education in schools and in programs preparing educators.

8. The creation and utilization of opportunities to promote in the community a continuing, informed dialogue about what education is and why it has more to do with welfare of both individuals and society than just preparation for jobs.

Embedded in the above agenda are the following assumptions about why schools and colleges of education need to change and how the changes might proceed:

1. Schools do not provide equal access to knowledge for all students.

2. Universities and colleges of education do not prepare teachers and administrators well for their roles in creating and functioning in schools that have as a first priority equal access to knowledge for all students.

3. The curricular, organizational and structural characteristics of

schools must change in significant ways in order to ensure that all students experience and benefit from an appropriate education.

4. The school as the center of decision making, change and renewal will promote the significant changes noted above and serve as a site for preparing prospective teachers and administrators. This requires:

o empowerment of all of the people associated with the school to create alternative practices that provide equal access to knowledge for all students;

o critical inquiry which encourages people at the school to examine what they do and why;

o agreement with a set of common values about the purposes, practices, and structures of schooling and higher education; and

o an understanding of the limitations of simplistic, linear change "models."

5. Schools and colleges of education are different cultures, each of which, in the past, has had its own turf. In order to work together productively both have to share common terrain.

There is an expectation that the fourteen partnerships will work with the agenda in their individual contexts. Each partnership has a different context and therefore may encounter different dilemmas in addressing the agenda. However, there are six dilemmas that have arisen in common across the Network which we explore below.

SIX DILEMMAS THAT WE ARE OBSERVING AND LEARNING ABOUT

During the past two and one-half years, we have crisscrossed the country in our regional coordinator roles. The comments which follow grow out of our efforts to understand what we have been witnessing as we viewed partnerships in action, and as we thought about the NNER agenda and the accompanying assumptions.

1. Uncommon Understandings about Our Common Agenda

Not everyone has the same understandings. We use the same words but we mean very different things. Some people are not receptive to new conceptions and have merely rearranged conventional ideas to fit the words that are used to describe partnership principles. One example of how old notions have been substituted for the intent expressed in partnership/network documents and discussions can be seen in some groups using the rubrics of empowering teachers and school-based renewal.

In several instances, in the name of teacher empowerment and school renewal, teachers have been asked to vote on which staff development training packages they prefer. While this may seem reasonable enough to some at first glance, several problems are inherent in a situation such as this. One is that empowerment in the context of the partnership concept encompasses much more than the freedom to vote on narrowly specified issues. Empowerment includes engaging in collaborative inquiry--in provoking and expanding one's own thinking in concert with others in the schools. It requires assessing what is actually occurring in the name of learning and teaching in a school and not falling into the trap of inserting easy answers into complex problems. Additionally, empowerment extends into such activities as digging into issues and trying alternatives. It implies breaking out of conventional responses and questioning prevailing assumptions.

In the example above, an alternative might have been for teachers and administrators to arrange to have time to engage in collaborative inquiry about the problems in their own experience and perhaps the provocation of an "alternative drummer," they could have brought current knowledge to bear upon issues they face and gained deeper insight into how these issues might be addressed. They would formulate alternatives which they would try out and

evalute with each other. From such collaboration they would develop a stronger base for working together and addressing other issues. The conventional approach, however, is to begin with an answer, and it is often a simplistic one. Collaborative inquiry does not mean reinventing the wheel, but it does mean launching efforts that lead to ongoing questioning, reflecting, creating and evaluating which translates into meaningful change.

In higher education, examples of varying meanings within the confines of old ideas can be seen in some of the efforts to change the content of methods courses and to offer more off-campus courses. These instances offer little little consideration of the broader context inherent in the partnership concept. The focus is still on "coursework" as the mainstay of college programs. Minor modifications include teachers to talk about courses or programs or designating teachers as clinical professors who then promote traditional approaches used in schools.

An alternative could be the development of key or partner schools through which, as John Dewey suggested, the problems of the schools could become the source of a science of education.[4] Thus coursework would be replaced by school faculty, university faculty, and prospective teachers working actual problems in school settings. Working with problems together could result in jointly published research, thus fulfilling an important mission of the university and expanding one for the school.

2. Different Reasons for Belonging

Individuals within a given partnership and across partnerships have expressed different reasons for belonging to the NNER. These reasons range from an interest in being a part of a project that is receiving national attention, to being very committed to the kinds of changes outlined in the NNER agenda.

While the reasons themselves may or may not pose a dilemma, problems do arise when the understanding of and commitment to the values and principles are limited to a superficial interest in belonging to a national movement.

Maintained at a superficial level, the partnership inhibits the opportunities for its members to engage in pivotal inquiry action. Those in the partnership who are committed to progress experience great frustration from the seemingly mixed message of belonging and standing still.

3. Process or Substance: The Great Dichotomy

We have a tendency to dichotomize our efforts, to think in terms of process or substance, structure versus function. If we have an emphasis on process, then we think we eliminate content; if we focus on content, we fear elimination of process. The way this problem has manifested itself in the partnerships has been in the preoccupation with form, process and structure.

The Network has contributed to the perpetuation of this dichotomy by developing "minimum essentials" which focused almost exclusively on questions of structure, e.g., a governing board consisting of deans, superintendents, and a modest secretariat. Although the original mission statement speaks to issues of substance, the requirements of "essentials" for involvement in the NNER did not speak to the integration of structure and substance.

Further, in individual partnerships, the first two years have been spent largely in discussions of how to be structured. In several partnerships, the discussion has centered on how to become restructuring places. Such discussions have been sorely lacking in restructuring "for what" and "about what." Few partnerships have begun to grapple with substantive issues to the extent of making a difference in classrooms and schools. This seems to be the easier

path, for emphasis on structure implies order and control. Or it can lead us away from the difficult and messy issues of substance.

Yet, issues of substance have not been avoided altogether. In one partnership, an executive director has shifted the focus of his work to an elementary school where he hopes to test some of the theories of school-centered change that he has written about. in another setting, work is moving forward on seven school-based projects with long-term renewal funding committed by the state and on four middle school professional development centers which, with foundation funding, are seeking to become exemplary centers for the field portion of pre-service training and for staff development. Three partnerships are working together to secure federal funding which they intend to use to support school-based renewal using substantive improvement in approaches to math instruction as the vehicle. In still another setting, a team of university and state officials is struggling to find a common language with faculty and administration at a school dealing with large numbers of at- risk students. Several partnerships have combined their involvement with the Holmes Group as they seek to define professional development centers that can serve as "Tomorrow's Schools."[5] The discussions of the Task Force on Equity and Access to Knowledge suggest that serious attention is being given to concerns for equity and excellence in a number of partnerships; there are indications that this attention is moving beyond the "talking about" into the "doing about" stage.

Often, we have encountered a certain amount of confusion about how partnership work groups or task forces might best proceed. Because the response frequently expected of educational groups is that of developing a set of recommendations for others, some task forces have a difficult time envisioning a different way of operating. For some groups, however, the idea of working on their own issues and sharing what they learn with others seems a very promising

and satisfactory way of engaging in renewal. Progress is most evident in those situations where the notion of creating the conditions for all to work together in such way remains in the forefront of the discussion. Such conditions include time, support and other resources for members to address difficult issues. It includes a willingness on the part of those in schools, districts and higher education to gain an understanding of what conditions are necessary and to move toward creating them.

Also, in some places, there is a sense of expectancy that someone (presumably John Goodlad) is going to come up with the answer and then we can all just do it. Those in such situations may have fallen into the trap of being passive learners, of "being processed," rather than understanding that no one source has "the" answers and that we all need to be taking initiative in exploring and trying out possibilities.

4. Resistance to Change: The Same, Only Better

Resistance to change exists, and it comes in many forms. Since the NNER is a proclaimed effort to promote change, we have witnessed many of the well-known examples of such resistance. Not everyone has the same desire to renew. Some people like the security of the way things are. Some people cannot imagine that schools can be different. They think of restructured schools as those with the same instructional, curricular, organizational and structural pieces, but arranged in a different way. Thus, the discussion of radical changes in the principal preparation programs or in fifth-year teacher education programs at the several institutions were characterized by advisory groups redefining the courses that are a part of a major.

In still other examples, schools are viewed as renewed if circumstances of individual teachers are changed (e.g., they are engaged in discussions of

problems in education, or they are given more "planning time") without consideration being given to the way teachers interact, the substantive information about which they interact, or the problems they are attacking. Some districts seem to believe that they are making significant advances if, rather than developing myriad instructional objectives at the central office, they develop fewer objectives and accompanying test items. There remains little attention to the need for teachers to work together to develop curricula in the context of their own settings and perhaps even less attention to understanding curricula in terms other than objectives and test items. The teacher is still viewed as the "deliverer" of learning. Current knowledge about how students learn is ignored or distorted to fit the old ways of doing things.

A tangential phenomenon is the belief that linear training in planning, teaching, or curriculum development, for example, is a prerequisite for any other approach. That is, in order for one to be able to work toward school-centered decision making, one first has to be well versed in behavioristic techniques in order to manage it all. It is possible that this belief provides some sort of security to those who have functioned only in deterministic ways. It does divert energy away from getting on with other ideas.

5. Leadership: What Kind and for What Purposes

Charismatic, issue-centered leadership has been identified as critical to the success of school-university partnerships.[6] The first years of the NNER confirm the importance of such leadership and provide evidence that there needs to be not only a charismatic individual to help create such partnerships but also a "chief worrier" whose primary position is to provide executive leadership to the organization. This "chief worrier" may or may not be the "issue-centered" person.

Each of the partnerships has numerous individuals in its schools and higher education institutions who have demonstrated that they can be leaders. The probability that some of the partnerships are stronger than others, that some demonstrate clear, purposeful action while others continue to spend much of their energy on trying to define their reason for being, may be related to the presence of focused leadership that is committed to and pursuing specific issues and is pursuing those issues.

In one partnership, "leadership" is an issue of importance to several key individuals. This partnership promotes teachers as leaders, seeks improved selection and training of principals, and creates thought-provoking seminars for central administrators. As this partnership progresses, members appear to be assuming leadership across lines as teachers, principals and central administrators engage in common dialogue. Meanwhile, some partnership members exhibit typical concerns about change, interpret information differently, seek to protect and expand personal reputations, and quarrel over specific strategies.

In some cases the initial leadership in a partnership shaped and continues to influence the agenda. For example, in one instance, commitment to school renewal has served as the rallying point, in another the issue of at-risk students was the focus, while in other partnerships attention to radical changes in administrative training has received the most attention.

Meanwhile, in several of the partnerships, the lack of a strong issue-oriented leader is evident as discussions persist over what the goals of the partnership are, why participants have come together and what is in it for the various partners. Such discussions, as mentioned previously, tend to keep partnerships stuck on structural questions, while avoiding matters of substantive reform.

Leadership is evident in more than the goals of the partnerships. The methods used for achieving these goals reflect different leadership styles. In several locations, discussion groups converse about recent books and articles on school renewal. In other cases, activity is more apt to consist of task force meetings to plan specific projects, to include revisions of university programs, or to stress restructuring of programs in schools. In some cases, all of these strategies are employed--thereby reflecting breadth and depth of leadership within the partnership.

Whatever the issues being considered or the methods chosen for consideration, the presence of "chief worriers" appears to be a necessary ingredient for action. Preliminary observation of progress suggests that the relationship between purposeful action and dialogue within a partnership is directly related to the amount of time the executive director devotes to the partnership, the status given the director within the partnership, the skills of the executive director and the ability of the executive director to understand both the problems of the schools and the universities. This is particularly made evident in those situations where the executive director position has changed several times during these initial years. In those instances where people in partner school districts and the university appear to be only vaguely aware that a partnership exists, it is common to find that the person charged with responsibilities as executive director also has other responsibilities requiring nearly full-time attention, has little prestige with either higher education or school personnel, and/or lacks the organizing and communicating skills needed to energize the partnership.

These shortcomings of the executive or secretariat role within the partnerships often do not exist because of lack of intelligence or effort on the part of individuals assigned these positions, but because of poor decisions on the part

of the partnership organizers, efforts to do something significant without investing significant money in the endeavor, and/or underestimating the complexity of the tasks. The most frequent reason given for lack of commitment to a full- or near-full time, high status, executive director is lack of resources. There is no doubt that schools and universities throughout the NNER need more resources. However, our information about the relative resources available in the different partnerships suggests that those who value such positions are able to find resources.

The problems associated with the executive director positions may also persist because of shortcomings in the efforts of the central staff of the NNER. The Network staff have to be at least partly responsible for the continued lack of knowledge of school and university problems among some of those in executive director positions. Whether it is due to efforts to avoid dictating an agenda to local partnerships, a national agenda which is overly broad and ambitious, or insufficient resources to provide for informative meetings with people, or a combination of all of these things is not clear. However, it does seem that the NNER staff need to share responsibility for the relatively weak operation of the "modest secretariat" expected in each of the partnerships. Perhaps a full-time executive director should be a condition for membership in the NNER.

6. Information Flow: Information to Whom and About What

An obvious function of a network is to distribute information. Given the mission of the National Network to promote the simultaneous renewal of schools and universities, it should be possible to observe various channels of communication operating within the Network to successfully spread information on progress being made. Formal processes have been established, including visits by NNER Director John Goodlad and by the three regional coordinators;

periodic publication of a newsletter; meetings once or twice a year involving executive directors from each of the partnerships; and meetings of task forces on principal selection and training, student access to knowledge, and problems of documenting partnership progress. A work group has met to share views on reforming the education of educators. The first steps have been taken to initiate a group which will focus on technology. One network-wide conference, The Tents by the Sea conference in the summer of 1987, created opportunities for exchange among participants with various roles in different partnerships, and a second network-wide session took place in November of 1988. Informal channels are at work as directors from some partnerships serve as resources at meetings of others, "experts" from some consult with school districts and universities in others, and books and journal articles are written detailing observations of work in the partnerships. One partnership has sponsored a conference on change which was attended by representatives from at least four other partnerships and others are now talking about comparable sessions.

These signs of information flow are encouraging even though conversations seem to be limited to a focus on individual's roles, on theories about how partnerships should operate, and on the rationale for such efforts. There is little critical description of actual activities involving schools working to make the radical changes for which the Network was created. At first glance, some observers conclude that this is because there is little such renewal activity under way. Yet, closer observations reveal universities that are making major changes in their approach to the training of principals and teachers, schools which are reshaping themselves as professional development schools and "schools for the 21st century,"[7] major initiatives by schools to approach the problems of students' access to knowledge in different ways, initiatives designed to alter the approach to learning of the disciplines through altered methods of

instruction and changed organization of curriculum, and ambitious plans to make more effective use of technology. However, information about these developments has not been communicated across the partnerships in the Network. One event which provided an exception to this observation was the NEA sponsored meeting in the fall of 1987 which involved representatives from NEA Mastery in Learning Schools, Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools, and the NNER. Other promising activities have included visits of administrative interns from one partnership with principal leaders from another and exchanges involving faculty and principals from schools on the East Coast with a school in the far west. Also, partnership representatives have presented progress reports on substantive issues at such national sessions as those of the AASA and the AERA. The Network will grow stronger as members engage in such activities.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

As we regional coordinators have observed partnerships struggle with these dilemmas, we have begun to assume an organizational developmental perspective. What follows is a description of the developmental stages that we believe the partnerships in the Network are experiencing.

Theorists argue that human learning advances through predictable stages. While some disagree with the argument that every individual passes through similar stages in order to achieve the same level of skill and knowledge, few disagree that it is possible to observe identifiable passages in most people's personal development.

Some network theorists have argued that there are similar stages in the evolution of institutional structures.[8] Certainly those studying with the change process have identified its developmental nature as experienced by individuals.[9] There appear to be institutional parallels.

The first years of the NNER provide evidence that formalized school-university partnerships move through fairly predictable stages. Like patterns of personal growth and moral development, not all partnerships move at the same rate and some may not progress beyond early stages of development. Just as a two-year-old may suddenly seem old for his or her age, or an adolescent to be reverting to the "terrible two's," partnerships move forward in a jerky, messy fashion, rather than progressing predictably in a linear manner.

Stage 1: Getting Organized

During this first stage, partnership founders seek to determine who will be involved, ask why it is being formed, draw up rules for operation and governance, and determine what resources will be invested. The tendency to stay at this stage for a long time--permanently in some cases--seems to be directly related to the willingness of partnership participants to commit to a common goal based on shared discomfort with existing conditions. Where one segment of the partnership (school or university) remains dissatisfied, the dialogue about structure persists. Goodlad described this stage when he observed that "the delegated institutional representatives often spend a lot of time seeking to uncover the initial purposes before coming to the realization that they must assume the task."[10] It is this realization by the participants that they must shoulder the burden, not recommend what others should do, that is critical to leaving this first stage behind.

Stage 2: Early Success

Excitement spreads as participants join in conferences and seminars, discover that there are common interests, meet with outsiders who reinforce them as being on the right track, and recognize the really significant challenges

that face them. This excitement is often recognizable as the glow which new acquaintances share at the end of a conference as they have discovered common concerns and joined in extended conversations about these concerns. Conference participants are often heard to say, "We need to do this more often;" "I didn't realize school (university) people were really worrying about the same thing I was;" or "This is so much more stimulating than attending a conference or a class where someone lectures to me."

Stage 3: Waiting for Results

As this first blush of success and satisfaction fades, there is a lull while participants struggle to achieve some real results from their labors. Impatient participants bail out. Self-doubt is expressed. Frequently, during this stage, partnership leaders retreat to discussion of structure, convene meetings asking, "What are our real goals?", and/or change people assigned formal leadership roles.

Stage 4: Major Success and Expansions

Next, results significant to participants are achieved, and (sometimes in a separate stage, sometimes as part of this stage) the base of participation expands to include teachers, administrators and professors from multiple areas of interest. The initiators of the partnership discover that success breeds success. Recognition accorded the partnership by outsiders leads others to seek admission, opens up sources of additional funding, and permits a deeper penetration of the partnership into all segments of the schools and universities involved. All participants commit additional resources.

Stage 5: Mature Partnership

Participants provide leadership to major renewal efforts in the schools and higher education. Critical inquiry into progress of partnerships on substantive issues dominates the conversation. Schools and colleges/universities involved are visibly engaged in restructuring going beyond tinkering. All the elements of a truly symbiotic relationship are present. Significant resources are committed on a long-term basis.

While activities in stages one through four could be occurring in any evolving school-university partnership, those in stage five are directly related to the agenda of the NNER. For example, a number of schools and university faculty in a partnership might join together to explore a common problem(s) such as the need to assess student progress in ways that promote learning and eliminate unfair labeling, grouping, etc. Members of the group inquire together into their present circumstances, try out alternative practices and share what they continue to learn with each other.

Given the nature of institutions, it also seems likely that there may be a sixth stage, which is not a reversion to earlier discussions of structure and purpose, but is a stage of decline and decay anticipating the demise of the partnership. In other instances, personal agendas of individual members may take the partnership in a different direction, as happened with at least one of the partnerships originally part of the National Network for Educational Renewal.

Where Are We?

At this time, it is possible to observe partnerships at stages one through four. As noted previously, some seem to move from stage one to stage two or three and back to one. In terms of the development of partnerships according to these stages, we do not have data to confirm or disconfirm the existence and

characteristics of stage five. Some of the partnerships are engaged in activities that would appear to characterize stage five, but they occur rather unevenly within a given partnership.

Movement from the early stages to that of stage four has been witnessed in several of the partnerships. In these cases, as implied earlier, competent, issue-focused leadership, a clear vision of the purpose of the partnership, and specific activities designed to overcome resistance to change have helped these partnerships move forward. How long it takes to progress, what the necessary activities might be, and other information about how a partnership moves through the stages are not clear. Additional data are required. During the next year, the regional coordinators will be working with the Network partnerships in ways to further seek understanding about the development of partnerships.

WHAT IS NEXT?

The next year in the NNER calls for continued examination of the development of the partnerships and the progress that each is making with the agenda outlined in the first part of this paper. This includes an overall assessment of the workability of the NNER and its fourteen members to simultaneously renew schools and programs for educators. This last section addresses the general course of action that the regional coordinators will be taking during the next two years. Because the NNER is moving into year four, our role has changed from that of resource for the formative stages of partnership development to that of helping partnerships assess their progress. It is our belief that the kinds of questions listed below will yield data and provide insight into the developmental stages through which partnerships move. This additional information also may tell us more about stage five which, in turn, may cause us to expand upon our definition of the stages. We further believe that these data will

help us understand the dilemmas that arise in each of these stages and will provide clues about how partnerships move from one stage to the next. Such understanding should help all of us to be increasingly effective in joining schools and universities for educational renewal.

Because school-centered decision making and renewal are key conditions in addressing the NNER agenda, the degree to which partnerships are engaged in these approaches will occupy much of our time. To illustrate--as we stated in the introduction--it is our understanding that renewal includes the examination of existing knowledge, conditions and practices. In order for renewal to happen, time for inquiry, the cultivation of leadership and the empowerment of participants must be in place.

In addition, information about the progress that partnerships are making on the NNER agenda items should be gathered. It is with this in mind that we offer the following questions as examples of the next phase of inquiry:

o What processes and structures now exist in partnership schools for examining existing conditions, practices and knowledge and for creating these anew? How are these processes and structures being used for such purposes?

o What examples can be identified that demonstrate that the principal and superintendent have encouraged teachers and others at a school to engage in inquiry and proceed with needed changes?

--What provisions are made to ensure that teachers have time to engage in inquiry and subsequent action?

--What examples show that teachers have engaged in renewing activities (alternative schedules, alternative curricular and grouping practices, etc.)?

o Is the university climate conducive for changes that encourage a symbiosis between the university and the schools?

o What steps are being taken to identify and develop sites such as partner schools (professional development or key schools) where future teachers, administrators and others are educated?

- What processes are in place for college faculty to inquire into their own programs?
- How are those in the schools involved in renewing preparation programs?
- How is the dialogue being extended to the community regarding the reshaping of schools and preparation programs?

Inquiry and renewal are based in part on the assumption that we do not understand all that we do or aspire to do. The three of us look forward to gaining a deeper understanding of the progress the partnerships are making, the obstacles each faces, and how best to overcome difficulties.

NOTES

1. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and John I. Goodlad, eds., *School-University Partnerships in Action: Concepts, Cases, and Concerns*, (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1988).

2. Paul E. Heckman, *Exploring the Concepts of School Renewal: Cultural Differences and Similarities between More and Less Renewing Schools*, Technical Report No. 33, (Los Angeles: Laboratory in School and Community Education, Graduate School of Education, University of California, 1982).

3. John I. Goodlad, "School-University Partnerships for Educational Renewal: Rationale and Concepts," in Sirotnik and Goodlad, *School-University Partnerships in Action*, 27. See also John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); Ernest L. Boyer, *High School*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1983); and Ted Sizer, *Horace's Compromise*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1984).

4. John Dewey, *The Sources of a Science of Education*, (New York: Liveright, 1929).

5. Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group*, (East Lansing, MI: Holmes Group, Inc., 1986).

6. See, for example, Richard W. Clark, "School-University Relationships: An Interpretive Review," in Sirotnik and Goodlad, *School University Partnerships in Action*, 32-65.

7. See Holmes Group, *Tomorrow's Teachers*, and Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, (New York: Carnegie Forum, 1986).

8. Ronald G. Havelock, *School-University Collaboration Supporting School Improvement: The Eastern Private University Network Case*, Vol. III, (Washington: National Institute of Education, Research and Practice Program, 1981).

9. See, for example, Ann Lieberman and David A. Shiman, "The Stages of Change in Elementary School Settings," in Carmen Culver and Gary J. Hoban, eds., The Power to Change: Issues for the Innovative Educator, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973).

10. John I. Goodlad, "School-University Partnerships: A Social Experiment," Kappa Delta Pi Record, Spring, 1988.

END

U.S. Dept. of Education

Office of Education
Research and
Improvement (OERI)

ERIC

Date Filmed

March 29, 1991